

## THE SYNDOS AND THE STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

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The marvelous growth and development of the State institutions of higher learning presents to the Church one of the most perplexing and difficult problems in the home field.

The early history of education in our country gives no light for the solution of this problem, for the Church was then supreme in the educational sphere. We would this were true today! But behold what time and money and well-directed energy have wrought. Today almost all the denominations have more young men in State institutions than in their own colleges.

Whatever may be our theories about education or our desires about our own denominational colleges, the great fact looms up before us that the State, with her unlimited resources and her splendidly articulated public schools, high schools, colleges and universities, is destined to become even a greater factor in educational matters than at present.

### A Neglected Field.

The phenomenal growth of the State educational institutions found the churches wholly unprepared. Legislatures appropriated fabulous sums of money. The students came by hundreds and by thousands. The State was unable to provide sufficient moral safeguards and positive Christian influence, and the Church at last awoke to the seriousness of the situation.

A loud call comes to the churches of the South today. Conditions are not so serious as those of the North, but they may rapidly become so. In some of our State institutions the influences are decidedly Christian. The presidents of some and the professors in many others are active officers in our own and other churches. They need, and in many instances they earnestly seek, the aid of the Church in their difficult task of developing the moral and religious life of the students.

Last year at twenty-six State institutions of the South there were 13,400 students, of whom almost one-sixth (2,179) were members or adherents of our own branch of the Presbyterian Church. The numbers are rapidly increasing each year.

In past years many of our consecrated Christian men have been trained in these institutions, and are now occupying places of great usefulness in our Church and the land. The Centennial Catalogue of one of our Theological Seminaries (Union Seminary, in Virginia) reveals the fact that out of 1,205 men enrolled, whose college could be easily determined, 131 came from twenty-four State institutions. Unless more intelligent effort is put forth in this direction these institutions will fall far short of this helpfulness in the future.

Dr. Buchanan well says: "For the great Presbyterian Church to leave to the accident of the size and wealth of the local congregation the question of whether its host of State university students will worship on the Lord's day in a church of their own denomination, or not, is monumental unwisdom and short-sightedness."

### Obligation Recognized.

It is a just cause for gratitude that our Church early began to realize the importance of looking after the religious interests of her sons at State institutions. The Synods of Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia have contributed through their Home Mission committees to the support of churches and capable pastors at Auburn, Chapel Hill, Clemson and Blacksburg. The Synod of Missouri is considering the placing of a student pastor at Columbia. The Presbyterian Ministers' Association of Austin is contemplating the placing of the Seminary professors in charge of a Presbyterian home for the students of the University of Texas. Other Synods are deeply interested in this problem and are earnestly seeking light for its solution.

It is clearly a problem to be faced by the Synods. The students are gathered, not from one Presbytery, but from over the whole State. As a rule, the churches at the seat of these institutions are weak and not able to secure a capable and efficient man, and if the church is strong, the additional work of ministering to a large crowd of college men, demands the services of a college pastor.

The General Assembly at Savannah unanimously adopted this resolution: "We urge our Synods to make the fullest possible provision for the spiritual interests of and pastoral oversight of the 2,179 men from Presbyterian homes who are students in their State universities."

Great wisdom is needed in dealing with this serious problem. There are many experiments being made, and we should profit by the experience of others.

### The Faculty.

The faculty, to a large extent, determine the character of the institution. By their lives and teaching is created an atmosphere in which the religious nature thrives or withers and dies. Great care should be taken by those in authority in order that only men of high character are selected for positions with responsibilities so great and influences so far-reaching. The fathers and mothers of the State have a right to demand that those who instruct their children shall be men of approved piety and shall have proper respect for the religious instruction that has been given in the home.

### Student Christian Associations.

The Christian organizations of the student body of any institution can accomplish much in developing the moral and religious life of the institutions. The work of the College Department of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Student Volunteer Movement have been a great blessing to the student life of the world. Some of its best organizations, with most effective work, are in State institutions. In a statement recently sent out by the Secretary for the South, Dr. Weatherford, the facts are given: Twenty-four college secretaries are giving their entire time to the religious development of students in the South. Ten thousand men are in the voluntary Bible classes of the associations. The association needs the co-operation of the pastors and Church, and is prepared to render them the fullest return of efficient service.